CLAIMS

I/We claim:

[c1]   1.   A method in a computer system for specifying media to be rendered at appliances, the method comprising:

identifying appliances available to render media;

identifying media sources;

receiving a definition of a plurality of activities, each activity specifying an appliance and a media source;

displaying an indication of activities;

receiving selection of an activity;

indicating that media associated with the media source of the selected activity is to be rendered on the appliance of the selected activity; and

displaying a media bar for controlling the rendering of the media on the appliance of the selected activity.

[c2]   2.   The method of claim 1 wherein the media bar includes a main control button, a forward button, a fast forward button, a back button, and a fast back button.

[c3]   3.   The method of claim 2 wherein the buttons have the same relative position regardless of the selected activity.

[c4]   4.   The method of claim 2 wherein each button has a button icon that is customized to the selected activity.

[c5]   5.   The method of claim 2 wherein the main control button supports play and pause functions.

[c6]   6.   The method of claim 2 wherein the buttons are circular and wherein the forward and fast forward buttons are right of the main control button and the back and fast back buttons are left of the main control button.

[c7]   7.   The method of claim 2 wherein the media bar further includes an add activity button and a delete activity button.

[c8]   8.   The method of claim 2 wherein the media bar includes a toggle view button.

[c9]   9.   The method of claim 1 including displaying a list of active activities along with the media bar.

[c10]   10.   The method of claim 1 wherein the media bar is similar in appearance to physical controls of a device.

[c11]   11.   A method in a computer system for providing a media bar for controlling rendering different types of media onto appliances, the method comprising:

identifying media for rendering on an appliance, the media having a media type;

retrieving an indication of controls used to control media of the identified media type; and

displaying a media bar for controlling the rendering of the identified media on the appliance wherein buttons of the media bar have the same shape and position regardless of the media type and wherein icons on the buttons change depending on the media type.

[c12]   12.   The method of claim 11 wherein the buttons are horizontally arranged.

[c13]   13.   The method of claim 11 wherein the media bar includes a main control button, a forward button, a fast forward button, a back button, and a fast back button.

[c14]   14.   The method of claim 13 wherein the main control button supports play and pause functions.

[c15]   15.   The method of claim 13 wherein the media bar further includes an add activity button and a delete activity button.

[c16]   16.   The method of claim 13 wherein the media bar includes a toggle view button.

[c17]   17.   The method of claim 11 wherein the buttons are circular and wherein a forward button and a fast forward button are right of a main control button and a back button and fast back button are left of the main control button.

[c18]   18.   The method of claim 17 wherein the buttons are circular.

[c19]   19.   The method of claim 18 wherein the main control button is larger than the other buttons.

[c20]   20.   The method of claim 11 including displaying a list of active activities along with the media bar.

[c21]   21.   The method of claim 11 wherein the media bar is similar in appearance to physical controls of a device.

[c22]   22.   The method of claim 11 including displaying additional buttons that are specific to the media type.

[c23]   23.   The method of claim 22 wherein the additional buttons are not displayed as part of the media bar.

[c24]   24.   The method of claim 11 including displaying a list of active activities along with the media bar and when an activity is selected, displaying additional buttons that are specific to a media type associated with the selected activity.

[c25]   25.   The method of claim 11 wherein the media bar includes a setup button.